CULTURAL MEMORY AND REVOLUTION: THE ROLE OF SECRET SOCIETIES AND LITERATURE IN CREATION OF OVERSEAS CHINESE REVOLUTIONARY ACTIVITIES BEFORE 1911

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Keyword


- **Jugen Habermas** (1962): “public sphere” - "the public sphere as a virtual or imaginary community which does not necessarily exist in any identifiable space"

- **Benedict Anderson** (1983): “imagine community” - a nation as a socially constructed community, imagined by the people who perceive themselves as part of that group ---- print capitalism + mass vernacular literacy
1. **Chinese in British Malaya and the formation of overseas Chinese society**
   - Political conflicts and colonial capitalism that affecting Chinese immigration and the formation of overseas Chinese community
   - Secret societies and the transmission of cultural memory by ritual activities and symbolic tradition.

2. **The decline of Qing dynasty, new era Chinese scholars and the modernization under Social Darwinism**
   - Social Darwinism under the British Malaya and the division of labor
   - Social Darwinism under the Chinese traditional thinking

3. **Revolutionary literature and the creation of revolutionary wave in British Malaya**
   - Revolutionary activist and British Malaya Chinese secret societies
   - Bring back the memory by selection of anti-Manchu literature: Yangzhou Shiliji 《扬州十日记》
   - Creation of ethnicity and anti-Manchu by revolutionary literature based on social Darwinism frame of thought: Meng Hui Tou 《猛回头》

4. **Conclusion: The cultural memory under the revolution era and colonial modernization**
Important Chinese port in Southeast Asia

Burma 400,000
Siam 2,500,000
British Malaya 2,115,000
Indo-China 500,000
Philippine Islands 750,000
British Borneo 150,000
Netherlands Indies 1,233,000
Oversea Chinese’s sphere

- Flexible kinship
  - Two family: mainland family local family
  - Adopt son
- Secret Society: 姓
- Double Citizenship
- Invisible empires
British Malaya Chinese and the formation of overseas Chinese society

- Chinese form of immigration

Political immigration:
The collapsed of Ming Dynasty, 1646

Economic and market force immigration;
Coolie trading in 19\(^{th}\) century

Birth of

Secret society

Support the growing of
British Malaya Chinese and the formation of overseas Chinese society

Political immigration: The collapsed of Ming Dynasty

Secret society

- Anti-Manchu
- Chinese connection between Southeast Asia and mainland China
- Control and protection of Chinese community's benefit
British Malaya Chinese and the formation of overseas Chinese society

- Increasing oversea Chinese population in Southeast Asia
- British Malaya government’s policy based on ethnic community/labor division
- Economic and market force immigration; Coolie trading
- Strengthen
- Secret society
British Malaya Chinese and the formation of overseas Chinese society

Secret Society

Brotherhood

Blood

三国演义/宋江

Myth/legend

Ritual and oath

Symbol

Blood Brother hood
British Malaya Chinese and the formation of overseas Chinese society

Historical Memory

反清复明
The decline of Qing dynasty, new era Chinese scholars and the modernization under Social Darwinism

Chinese traditional race categorization

The concept of race in China was established in ancient time.

Changed rapidly in the 19th century under influence of Western and Japanese thinking.
The decline of Qing dynasty, new era Chinese scholars and the modernization under Social Darwinism

- Colonial economic importance
  - Rubber estates (workers from India)
  - Tin mines (workers from China)

Division of labor based on ethnicity: Social Darwinism
The decline of Qing dynasty, new era Chinese scholars and the modernization under Social Darwinism

Race issue in modern China

康有为, 1858-1927
梁启超, 1873-1929
章炳麟, 1869-1936
谭嗣同, 1865-1898
The decline of Qing dynasty, new era Chinese scholars and the modernization under Social Darwinism

《天演论》

Evolution and Ethics

自强保种
合群保重

Chinese Tradition and Western Thinking

Yan Fu (严复，1854-1921)
The decline of Qing dynasty, new era Chinese scholars and the modernization under Social Darwinism

New Chinese intelligentsia in Japan

Revolutionary Activities Flourish

Publication both old and new anti-Manchu literature
Revolutionary literature and the creation of revolutionary wave in British Malaya

Revolutionist and Secret Society

- Recruit Secret Society’s members.
- Merged with lower class by operating free clinics, gambling and using opium with labour groups
- Win the support from Secret Society depend on the same original purpose Anti-Manchus
Revolutionary literature and the creation of revolutionary wave in British Malaya

Revolutionist’s publication example:
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扬州十日记
(Yangzou Shiriji)
Both are historical records from eye witnesses in time of Ming fall and the Qing rise. 扬州十日记 recorded about Yangzhou’s Massacre in 1645 and the 嘉定三屠 is about three Massacres in Jiading in 1645.

嘉定三屠
(jiadingsantu)
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扬州十日记’s publication in 1903 by revolutionist

- Because it’s one of the book banned by Qing government, revolutionist student in Japan originally published in Japan, and later in Shanghai.

- 扬州十日记 was published in Baihua (白话) version. It was directed at ordinary Chinese people who could read, and spread this anti-Manchu literature.

- 扬州十日记 was well accepted both in mainland China and overseas.
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Why Yangzhou Shiriji?

- Real historical record from eye witnesses.

- Manchu’s military invasion and their brutality and cruelty to Han Chinese.

- This brutal massacre happened in 江南 area, including Shanghai, Nanjing, Hangzhou, Ningbo. These cities are the hometown of youth-revolutionist.

Used the historical memory for creating and cultivating anti-Manchu sentiment among Chinese new generation.
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The influence of 扬州十日记 among overseas Chinese activists

Both ancestors came from Zhangzhou (漳州) and Chaozhou (潮州), the areas affected by Manchu military invasion in 17th century and the suppression of Taiping rebellion in 19th century. The story of suffering and agony still resonates in the overseas Chinese community.

Teo Eng Hock (张永福, 1872-1959)

Tan Chor Lam (陈楚楠-1884-1971)
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Teo Eng Hock always recognized Singapore Chaozhou people’s story of Manchu resistance before they emigrated to Malaya.

Yangzhou shi riji let overseas Chinese youth generation understand the reason why they had to flee their ancestral homeland, and why they have to live under the colonial government as second-class citizens.
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Modern literature / New anti-Manchuism literature

Writing by Chinese students in Japan.

- New thought
- Social Darwinism (Yan Fu)
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Chen Tianhua (陈天华, 1875-1905)

- Chinese student in Japan
- Founder of Ershishiji Zhina Journal《二十世纪支那》
- Writer of Sun Yatsen’s Minbao 《民报》
- Criticized Kang Youwei (康有为, 1858-1927) and his “Save the Emperor Association Society” (保皇会)
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Tanci (弹词) style writing

Used narrative and poem mixes together

Easy to remember and emotionally moving

“疼只疼, 甲午年, 打了败阵; 疼只疼, 庚子年, 惨遭杀伤。疼只疼, 割去地, 万古不返; 疼只疼所赔款,永世难偿。”

“So much hurt, the Jiawu year, loss in the war; so much hurt, the Gengzi year, loss and death. So much pain, the land was cut, glory past never returns; pain is the only compensation for pain, the thing that never ends.”
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Social Darwinism + Anti-Manchuism

Using traditional race category and "new" race category + created crucial and brutal image for Manchu

十八省 means area under Ming authority, excluding Manchu areas.

汉人做满人的奴隶, 是做惯了的, 自然安然无事。我们是奴隶的奴隶, 各国是主人家的人家, 何等便当？。。。

Han people is Manchu slave, accustomed to slavery, naturally. We are the slave of slave, every country is our owner, can we accepted?
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Social Darwinism + Anti-Manchuism

European nation-state concept that followed the logic of nationalism and social Darwinism

天下五大洲

Five races under heaven

灭国的名词叫做民族帝国主义

The fall of the state was called “colonized by imperial country.”

换朝算不得灭国

Change dynasty can’t compare with being a falling state

All races have fight each other for survival in global competition in the world characterized by imperialism and Social Darwinism

Revolutionary and Secret Society’s Goals
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我汉人，开基始祖；名黄帝

黄帝
Yellow Emperor

同族

Exclude Manchu, include Chinese who live overseas.

The same race / Hanzhong (汉种) is the large Xing (姓), Huangdi is the first grand ancestor. All those who are not Hangzhong are not descendants of Huangdi
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Menghuitou and Overseas Chinese

南洋群岛一带，以及美洲，澳洲，中国有二三百万人，在那里做苦工生，那人异常妒忌，每人上岸就要抽五十圆的税，每年还有种种的税，少不如他们的意，他就任意打死。有一个地方，号做檀香山，有中国万多入的街，病死一个妇人，也是常事，那样人说是疫死的，怕传染他们外国人，就放火把这街全行烧了。”

2-3 million Chinese people were living In Southeast Asia, America and Europe., and are mostly labour. The Westerner always envy or resent them, so when they reached port, Chinese were ordered to pay 50 dollars head tax. Every year they also had many other taxes. If Chinese weren’t willing to pay, they were abused until they dead. There was a place in Honolulu where many streets were settled by Chinese. If just one women died there of normal causes, the Westerners thought the cause of death was epidemic. Afraid that epidemic would infect Westerners, they burnt that street down.
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By using style writing and symbolic metaphor

Social Darwinism

Colonialization

Anti-Manchu/Anti-foreignism

Racial destruction

Chen Tianhua’s writing had a substantial influence on Chinese youth generation, both on the mainland and overseas. The anti-foreignism and anti-Manchu in Chen’s work was even more appealing to overseas Chinese communities.

Overseas Chinese experience under colonial government, the persecution from foreigner; especially the decline of social status after British monopolized trade power in 1909
## Memorialization / collective memory

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Conclusion: What’s the role of and revolutionary use of cultural memory in overseas Chinese revolution’s activities.
Conclusion

• Overseas Chinese historical background was very important for creating revolutionary movement. The transmission of memory through group activities, ritual and symbolism, are functional in creation of shared collective memory.

• Cultural memory and collective memory have transnationalism and transboundary characteristics played a crucial role in creation of revolutionary sentiment both in mainland China and overseas.

• The condition of communities under modernization and colonialism provided background and frame of thought in created collective memory in transnationalism’s way.

• Revolutionary’s publication of literature was selected for matching with overseas Chinese collective memory. This selective literature reconstruction of the past that brought a process of contemporary human beings creating a space to existing along with the wisdom of their ancestor, and maintenance of ethnic identity.